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President Shelly Says LCR Settlement Is Not Final and Needs Navajo Approval



President Shelly restated that the Little Colorado River Water Settlement still needs Navajo approval before it's finalized.

Pinon, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly restated that the Little Colorado River Water Settlement still needs approval of the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe before it's finalized.

"The water settlement has not approved by the Navajo Nation," President Shelly said, adding that concerned people can also speak to their Council Delegates, in addition to speaking at a water settlement forum.

He added that the water settlement has to go through the Navajo Nation Council first, before it comes to the President office.

"There is a process," President Shelly said.

The President urged Navajo people concerned about the settlement to learn about it and proactively suggest solutions and recommendations for the settlement.

"We want to see you have a voice in the settlement," President Shelly said in his closing remarks after a four and half hour-long town hall style meeting at Pinon Chapter House Wednesday.

The chapter house was filled to capacity of about 150 people, but as people left the meeting, people in a line awaiting entrance to the chapter house were allow to enter the building, bringing the total number of attendees to about 300 people.

About 20 people spoke after an hour and half long 44-slide power point presentation regarding the settlement. Navajo Nation Water Commissioners Ray Gilmore and Leo Manheimer gave the presentation.

Most of the people spoke against the settlement.

“You’re saying ‘no,’ we understand that,” President Shelly said, while asking for solutions and recommendations from the attendees.

Some people spoke out against the presentation saying that it was too long, but the President responded.

“We wanted to make sure the people have a full view of the presentation,” President Shelly said.

However, about a dozen young people in the audience were openly upset about the format of the meeting.

Each person addressing the leaders was given a few minutes to speak, and the speakers had to sign in to speak.

The younger crowd grew restless as the meeting entered its last hour, the two of the young people began to raise their hands to speak.



Bessie Yellowhair-Simpson, who moderated the meeting, reminded the audience of the process to speak at the meeting and asked the people to quietly wait their turn.

“We still have questions,” one young woman said loudly in an otherwise quiet meeting.

While a community member was trying to speak, some of the young people continued their loud interjections.

Yellowhair-Simpson attempted to settle the bursts of comments by pleading with the young people to no avail.

Then an elderly woman from Pinon, who offered the opening prayer, spoke to the audience in Navajo and some English and pleaded with the young people to be respectful of the speakers.

“Is that what they teach in school?” the woman asked the young people. “You need to listen, you need to listen to your elders.”

Most of the young people sitting together talked among each other while the elderly woman spoke to them. During her pleading, some of the young people snickered.

After she spoke for a few minutes, the meeting started closing with some closing remarks from President Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim.

After the meeting, Vice President Jim met with some of the young people who said their voice wasn't being heard.

Vice President Jim said that he is interested in meeting with the young people further.

Some of the youth said the leaders are out of touch with the young people.

“The youth are very important,” Vice President Jim said.

The following is a schedule of remaining water settlement forums all of which are scheduled to start at 4 p.m. and end at 7 p.m.

- **April 19, 2012** Ganado Chapter House, Ganado, Ariz.
- **April 20, 2012** Oak Springs Chapter House, Oak Springs, Ariz.
- **April 24, 2012** Leupp Chapter House, Leupp, Ariz.
- **April 25, 2012** Teesto Chapter House, Teesto, Ariz.
- **April 26, 2012** Fort Defiance Chapter House, Fort Defiance, Ariz.

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